



NEWS

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INVASIVE SPECIES COST BILLIONS EACH YEAR

SAINT PAUL, MN, April 17, 2006- –It's not something most people think about every day, if at all. However, the problem of invasive species has a huge economic impact on the United States. One report cited in the *National Management Plan for Control of Invasives* estimates about \$140 billion in damages to U.S. crops, industry, the environment and public health.

Invasive plant or animal species are *alien* or *non-native* to a particular ecosystem; their introduction can cause serious environmental harm or harm to human health. And they're everywhere. Some examples include:

- 1) Zebra mussels invaded the Great Lakes through ship ballast water, and now clog water intake pipes to many industries.
- 2) The Asian long horned beetle, which likely arrived in solid wood pallets made in china, is causing the destruction of valuable trees.
- 3) Purple loosestrife has beautiful purple flowers; however it is choking our native plants in wetlands and waterfowl habitats.
- 4) The West Nile virus, transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that fed on the blood of infected animals, is a growing health problem in the United States.
- 5) Reed Canary Grass is the most aggressive and destructive invader of wet meadows, sedge meadows and wetlands throughout the agricultural regions of the State. It decreases wetland plant diversity and provides poor nesting and foraging habitat for wildlife.

Invasive species often have few natural enemies in their new environment and out-compete existing species. They have had a negative impact and contributed to the listing of a third to half of the native species on the Federal Endangered Species list.

For more information about NRCS in Minnesota, please visit our website at:
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The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

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